

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 25TH AUGUST 2020 AT 7.30PM
USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

PRESENT:

	The Mayor (Councillor Mrs C Reavey)	
	The Deputy Mayor (Councillor C P O'Rourke)	
Councillor Mrs P H Whiting		Councillor V J Paul (Item 20/253 onwards)
Councillor H L Jackson		Councillor N Brown
Councillor P Tomas		Councillor Mrs A Gardner
Councillor B Prigmore		Councillor B Spencer
Councillor A M T Reading		Councillor J Smithers
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)		Emily Arrow (Administration Officer)
David Wicks (Mayors' Sergeant)		

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the public.

20/251. **APOLOGIES**
Cllrs Mrs A Sauntson, Cllr Mrs S Mantle and Cllr D Hamblin

20/252. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Other Interests

Cllr P Tomas and Cllr Jackson – Item 20- Rushden East – District Councillors. As a member of both Town and District Council they will reconsider all matters at a District level taking into account evidence and representations at the District tier. Therefore, they cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by decisions of this Council

Cllr J Smithers – Item 20- Rushden East County Councillor- Has been involved in highway issues connected to the proposed development.

20/253. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 28th July 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a true and correct record.

20/254 **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

Resident spoke about the problems with the speed of Traffic in Wharf Road, particularly after the junction with Gardenfields toward Riverside Park. The area was populated by young families and elderly residents and he was concerned that there would be an incident. There needed to be some Traffic Management improvements. Following correspondence with the Clerk he had been in contact with NCC Highways and the Police and there was due to be a traffic survey carried out.

Clerk advised that she had reported the issue to the Police and has advised the resident that it was NCC Highways who could install traffic management features. It was an area that the Council had previously lobbied for changed to the priority at the Gardenfields junction and had lobbied for traffic calming measure to be paid for by Linden Homes. These measures had been removed after a change to the S278 agreement was agreed by NCC highways with no consultation with the Town.

Cllr Smithers, as the County Councillor, offered to correspond with the resident on this issue.

20/255. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We marked VJ day on Saturday August 15th with a short remembrance ceremony which included a reading and the laying of a wreath. My thanks go to Cllr Jackson for putting up the flags along the High St and to Emily for posting an article on facebook to make everyone aware of the importance of VJ day and also to Emily for recording the ceremony and then including a video recording of Rev Michelle's prayers when posting on face book and youtube.

On Wednesday 19th August (all armed with our umbrellas) Cllr Whiting and myself were joined by ENC leader Cllr Steven North Cllr Helen Howell ENC chairman and Cllr Richard Gell at the unveiling of the new interpretation panel at Nightingale Way Play area. Cllr Gell shared with us the history of the land known as 'Stanwick Rd Recreation Ground'. I'm sure that this panel will be appreciated by both the residents of and visitors to Higham Ferrers. I would like to thank Alicia for her work in helping to produce the information panel and also for taking the photographs. Unfortunately, she discovered that it was impossible to juggle her camera and her umbrella, so she got rather wet.

On Thursday, myself Chris Emily and Rev Michelle had a zoom meeting to discuss the Civic service which had been scheduled for Sept 20th. It is regrettable that we have had to cancel the service on this date, but we have made a provisional booking for Feb 28th. So please pencil this date in your diaries

Today I came to the town hall to see the silver salver that we have bought to send to Hachenburg to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the twinning treaty. This coming Thursday should have been the start of our visit to Hachenburg which was cancelled earlier in the year because of Covid19. We hope to celebrate this occasion with them in 2021

20/256. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk provided a verbal update to the written report. Due to the high winds further trees works had been necessary in Riverside Park for safety reason. She confirmed that the tree that had fallen had blocked a path and was overhanging the lake, so could not be left in situ.

Cllr Smithers asked that the police be requested to provide detection and conviction rates for the crimes.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk's Report be received and noted.

20/257. **QUESTIONS**

Cllr O'Rourke asked why the Union Jacks had been erected in the town for VJ Day, when they had all not been put up for VE Day due to the ongoing COVID Pandemic. Clerk explained that Cllr Jackson was acting under the Tourism umbrella when the flags were erected. The brackets were Tourism's responsibility. The flags were purchased by the Town Council for one of the Jubilee celebrations and would be needed in the event of a coronation.

20/258.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

Cllr Mrs A Gardner reported on her monthly walkabout with the PCSO. There were current issues with mopeds using the Greenway and causing a nuisance. They could be issued with a s59 notice if caught and on the second breach their bikes could be confiscated. She reminded councillors that any antisocial behaviour needed to be reported to the Police. If crimes were not reported the Police thought Higham did not have a problem. If an offensive weapon was involved 999 should be called.

20/259.

REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr P Tomas reported that the District Council had been inundated with planning applications and therefore extra meetings had been planned.

Cllr Smithers had no formal report, but if anyone had any questions or queries, they should contact him directly.

20/260.

FINANCE

20/260.1.

To approve accounts for payment as at 25th August 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment total of £24766.80 as at 25th August 2020 be approved for payment. Copy attached to the minutes.

20/260.2.

That the bank account reconciliation as at 30th June 2020 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

20/261.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

20/261.1.

Planning and Development Committee held on the 11th August 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 11th August 2020 be received and adopted.

20/261.2.

Policy and Resources Committee held on the 11th August 2020

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 11th August 2020 be received and adopted.

Recommendations

(i) **REVIEW OF POLICIES**

RESOLVED:

That the following policies be reviewed without change: -

- Flag Flying Policy.
- Graffiti Policy.
- Media Policy.
- Memorial Safety Policy.
- PAT Policy
- Grant Aid Policy.
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(ii) **CO-OP BUS LAY BY**

RESOLVED:

That the project be discontinued, and no further staff time be committed to the project.

20/262. **COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT**

Points raised in the discussion: -

- Need for business plan so it could be understood how such a building could be run and funded.
- Not the right time.
- Consultation could be carried out virtually or face.
- Need for a community hub.
- With the economy downturn some residents could lose their jobs. Was this the right time to potentially be adding to the Council tax for such a large project.

RESOLVED:

That the project be put on hold until after the elections. Councillors felt it was not the right time to be proceeding with this large project.

20/263. **ECONOMY OF THE TOWN**

To review the Councils' Vision and Objectives relating to maintaining the vitality and vibrancy of businesses in Higham Ferrers, which ensures that Higham Ferrers continues to be economically healthy. This relates to the period April 2021 onwards.

During the brief discussion, the following points were raised: -

- There were opportunities provided by social media to promote the town at a reasonable cost.
- The link on Rushden Lakes website went straight to Rushden TC website.
- Unsure of the benefits of working with Rushen Lakes.

RESOLVED:

That the item be delegated to the Policy and Resources to consider.

20/264. **USE OF CASTLE FIELDS AND OPEN SPACES FOR EXERCISE AND SPORT CLASSES**

20/264.1 To agree a response to requests for the use of Castle Fields and other open space for outdoor fitness classes.

RESOLVED:

That outdoor fitness classes such as Zumba be allowed to take place on Castle Fields and other open spaces subject to applicants providing: -

- Evidence of Public Liability Insurance
- A risk assessment including a specific COVID risk assessment.

There would be no charge initially.

20/265. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE 2020**

20/265.1. **To receive and note the minutes of the Events Working Party meeting held on the 7th July 2020.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Events Working Party meeting held on the 7th July 2020 be received and noted.

20/265.2. **To agree to cancel Christmas Sparkle 2020 due to the risks posed by COVID 19**

RESOLVED:

That Christmas Sparkle 2020 be cancelled due to the risks posed by COVID 19. The cancellation would be widely publicised once other activities have been agreed,

- 20/265.3. **To consider options for additional lighting and virtual activities.**
Members liked all the suggestions made. Cllr Paul offered to assist with sponsorship. Cllr Smithers that local schools be encouraged to make decorations for the trees which they could put on the tree themselves at allocated times. Clerk confirmed there was a budget to fund any additions to lighting etc.
- 20/266. **TOWN AND FARMERS MARKET WORKING PARTY**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the Town and Farmers' Market Working Party meeting held on the 18th August 2020 be received and noted.
- 20/267. **LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**
RESOLVED:
That the meetings of the Full Council and Committee meetings be live streamed from September.
- 20/268. **IT WORKING PARTY**
RESOLVED:
That notes of the IT Working Party meeting held on the 25th June 2020 be received and noted.
- 20/269. **CLOSURE OF MEETING TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**
RESOLVED:
That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the following items of business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting.
- 20/270. **RUSHDEN EAST**
Following a discussion of the report on the meeting held on 17th August. Members expressed strong views on the fact they felt they were being side-lined and all the connectivity was being pushed towards Rushden.
RESOLVED:
- That the Clerk send a strong letter to East Northants Council reminding them of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and that the connectivity to Higham Ferrers should not be ignored. Any funding from the Sharba Homes estate to help fund this connectivity should serve Higham Ferrers.
 - That engagement takes place with press expressing the frustration at being side-lined, views of the council and the residents via the Neighbourhood Plan being ignored. This was one of the reasons that the Council were looking to review the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 20/271. **RE-OPEN THE MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**
RESOLVED:
That the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.
- 20/272. **ITEMS TO REPORT**
No items raised.

Mayor

Date